

## Water Update

Reported by Division of Plant Industry

The irrigation companies went to half turns last week in Weber County. If they hadn't the water would have been gone by mid August. They are currently using water from storage in Echo Reservoir and releasing it into the Weber river for use here. The Weber river would be too low at this point to supply the needed irrigation water without the additional water from the storage. Most of the grain crops have been harvested so there won't be a problem there. There will be another alfalfa cutting later but the alfalfa is okay at this point. Onions, corn and other row crops haven't been harvested and might suffer some damage. In Rich County, canals are still full of water. Most of their land is irrigated from the Bear River, at least in the south end of the county. There was still irrigation water serving the Bear Lake area raspberries, grain and pastures. Hay should be fine. Any irrigated land should be fine for the summer. All dryland and range locations are very dry. The cattle may be forced off their ranges early this year because of lack of forage. Those decisions will be made by the BLM and USFS.

In Cache County, most of the canals are in good shape. The main canals are fed from the Bear, Logan, Blacksmith Fork, Cub, and Little Bear Rivers. These canals tend to have irrigation rights which have priority over other uses of the water. Anyone having secondary irrigation should be alright. I'm not aware of any restrictions yet. Any dryland and non-irrigated land is bone dry. I don't expect much of dryland crops such as wheat, barley, safflower, or any second crop of alfalfa. We're probably past the point where rain would help any of these crops except maybe safflower. Grasshoppers don't seem to be as bad as last year although they are still around. Irrigated corn is generally okay but there are huge plant size differences in some areas. The hot and dry conditions really affected germination and establishment thus creating the differences. Pasture and range areas without supplemental irrigation will be in trouble

## EMPLOYEE NEWS

**Liberty Glines** is Administrative Services' new **Technical Support Specialist**. She previously worked as a LAN administrator for the Intermountain Allergy and asthma Clinic.

## P.A.W.S. On Wheels

The Utah Association of Conservation District's (UACD) mobile classroom, called P.A.W.S. On Wheels is now on the road, bringing its message of soil conservation and agricultural education to the public. PAWS stands for; Plants, Animals, Water, and Soil.

The new mobile classroom was introduced to employees of the Department of Agriculture and Food in June and is being scheduled for use at various Utah schools during the remainder of the year.

The classroom was conceived and designed by UACD Education Specialist, Sherri Einfeldt. "Our message of soil and natural resource conservation is so important that it deserves to be heard and understood by every Utahn. Our conservation education efforts have targeted mostly elementary students to this point, and have been enthusiastically received, she said."

The mobile classroom is designed to hold about 12 students at a time. Inside students can participate in interactive learning stations, read information about plants, animals, water and soils as well as view video-tapes on interesting subjects. To schedule the PAWS van visit contact: einfeldt@davis.uswest.net or by phone: (801) 547-



*The new PAWS classroom was introduced to Utah Department of Agriculture and Food employees in June. Inside, children can visit several hands-on work stations to learn about **Plants, Animals, Water and Soils**.*

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AUGUST 2000

Agriculture: Your Food Resource

on the

web



Governor  
Commissioner of Agriculture and Food  
Public Information Office Editor

Michael O. Leavitt  
Cary G. Peterson  
Larry Lewis

# Agricultural Resource Land Protected At Black Island Farm

## *Quality Growth Commission Completes Its First Conservation Project*

The Utah Quality Growth Commission, the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food and The Nature Conservancy of Utah joined forces on June 30 to announced the purchase of a conservation easement on 39.8 acres of prime agricultural land in western Davis County. The scenic parcel, also important for its open space and wildlife values, is part of Black Island Farms, a successful Davis County farming operation owned by fourth generation Utah farmer Charlie Black and his family. It will be protected from development in perpetuity as a result of this precedent setting transaction.

This partnership effort is the first of its kind ever completed under the auspices of the Quality Growth Commission, which has contributed a grant of \$172,500 to the project. The Commission, formed in 1999 after passage of the Utah Quality Growth Act, administers approximately \$2.75 million a year through the LeRay McAllister Fund for the preservation of open space and agricultural lands through conservation easements. Additional grants of \$50,000 were contribute from a special agricultural land protection fund from the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food and \$171,500 in private funds raised by The Nature Conservancy of Utah.

Charlie Black, The Department of Agriculture and Food (UDAF) and The Nature Conservancy of Utah, have worked together to negotiate the terms of the conservation easement which will be held by the UDAF. Under the agreement, Charlie Black will continue to farm 700 acres of highly productive land (a major vegetable growing operation), while committing to never subdivide the lower 39.8 acres of his property providing a buffer to the Conservancy's Layton Wetlands Preserve. Mr. Black will receive \$394,000 for the easement which restricts his, and any future owners, ability to develop this property. This is one of very few such easement agreements in the state and the first ever negotiated in Davis County.

The Black Island Farm conservation easement represents a win-win proposal for a number of reasons. First, it represents a victory for agricultural interests working to promote production agriculture and help assure that family farms and ranches throughout the west survive. Second, Charlie Black's commitment to never develop this critical buffer zone on his property represents a victory for open space enthusiasts who worry that too much land along the Wasatch Front is being lost to urban sprawl.

Governor Mike Leavitt said, "Agricultural land is a critical part of our state's heritage and beauty. This is exactly the sort of preservation we hoped to accomplish when we established the Quality Growth Commission. I congratulate all the participants in this successful conservation project."

Utah Quality Growth Commission Chair, Mayor Lewis Billings said, "Utah's economic future depends on maintaining our quality of life, this can only be achieved by saving those aspects of our community that define who we are." Billings added, "Utah's agricultural lands really are a historical marker for our culture. This project exemplifies quality growth and the responsible preservation of land that serves multiple community purposes."

Utah Commissioner of Agriculture and Food, Cary Peterson, has long been a supporter of critical agricultural resource land and watershed preservation efforts and has played a key role in supporting the Black Island easement concept. Peterson said, "Agriculture is vital to Utah's economy and to many of the values we hold dear. But, with the growth we are experiencing, our valuable farmland along the Wasatch Front is under siege. This is an innovative project that will keep valuable farmland in production and allow critical resource lands to be preserved. It is an important partnership that needs to be replicated statewide."

State Representative Kevin Garn, from Davis County, (primary sponsor of the recently passed Utah Quality Growth Act which seeks to address Utah's open space and growth needs) added, "Quality growth will depend on building livable communities and protecting green spaces like Black Island Farms.

Charlie Black, owner of Black Island Farms, added

"This land means a lot to our family. With this easement, we will be able to keep farming and not have to subdivide the property. I hope others in agriculture will view this as



Landowner, Charlie Black, distributes vegetables to Governor Leavitt (right), UDAF Commissioner Peterson (center), Quality Growth Commission Chairman, Lewis Billings (2nd from left), and Davis County Commissioner, Carol Page, during conservation easement ceremonies at Black Island Farm in Syracuse. Black said the sales of a conservation easement to the UDAF represented an "insurance policy" of sorts to protect the food supply, wildlife and the environment. Mr. Black is active in agricultural education projects. (below) Mr. Black shows a class of elementary school students how carrots are grown and harvested during a recent Agricul-

